

# PAVLON'S HOUSE



a one-shot inspired by true events

written & illustrated by Rob Cross



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## PRESCRIPT

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In 1941 Germany invaded Soviet Russia, their blitzkrieg tactics sweeping all before them. For a time it looked like Russia would fall, but then the Germans hit the city of Stalingrad, and their "lightning war" ground to a halt.

The battle for Stalingrad was one of the largest, most vicious battles in human history. The close nature of the urban warfare turned every building into a potential bunker or fortress, and pitched battles were fought for single houses.

Few of these buildings were as iconic as "Pavlov's House".. Cut off from support by the German advance, which had trapped the Red Army in a tiny area against the River Volga, Sgt. Yakov Pavlov and his squad of just three soldiers held a housing block for more than two months against almost daily German assaults.

During the battle Pavlov's squad were reinforced by just 21 soldiers, via a small trench dug from a friendly position..

By the time a major Russian counter-attack relieved the house, Pavlov and his squad had killed over 400 Germans. More than had died in the capture of Paris, as Josef Stalin himself was so fond of recounting.





25th NOVEMBER, 1942

You don't imagine things like this ever happening to you. It's always someone else, someone far away.

But it has happened. The German invaders have turned this once-great city of Stalingrad into a blasted hell.

I'm one of the last left in this house now, but I'm not leaving.... Winter is drawing in, and at least it's a little warmer in here than out there.

And it's home.

My home.

This is my home. My city. My country. And I'm not ready to give them up without a fight....



My housing block occupies a commanding position overlooking 9th January Square, making it a vital tactical strongpoint.



Needless to say, the German army  
are desperate to capture it.



And we're desperate to keep it.  
"Not one step back", Stalin's  
words resonate in our heads.



They're paying in blood for what they've  
done to his great city. To our great city.

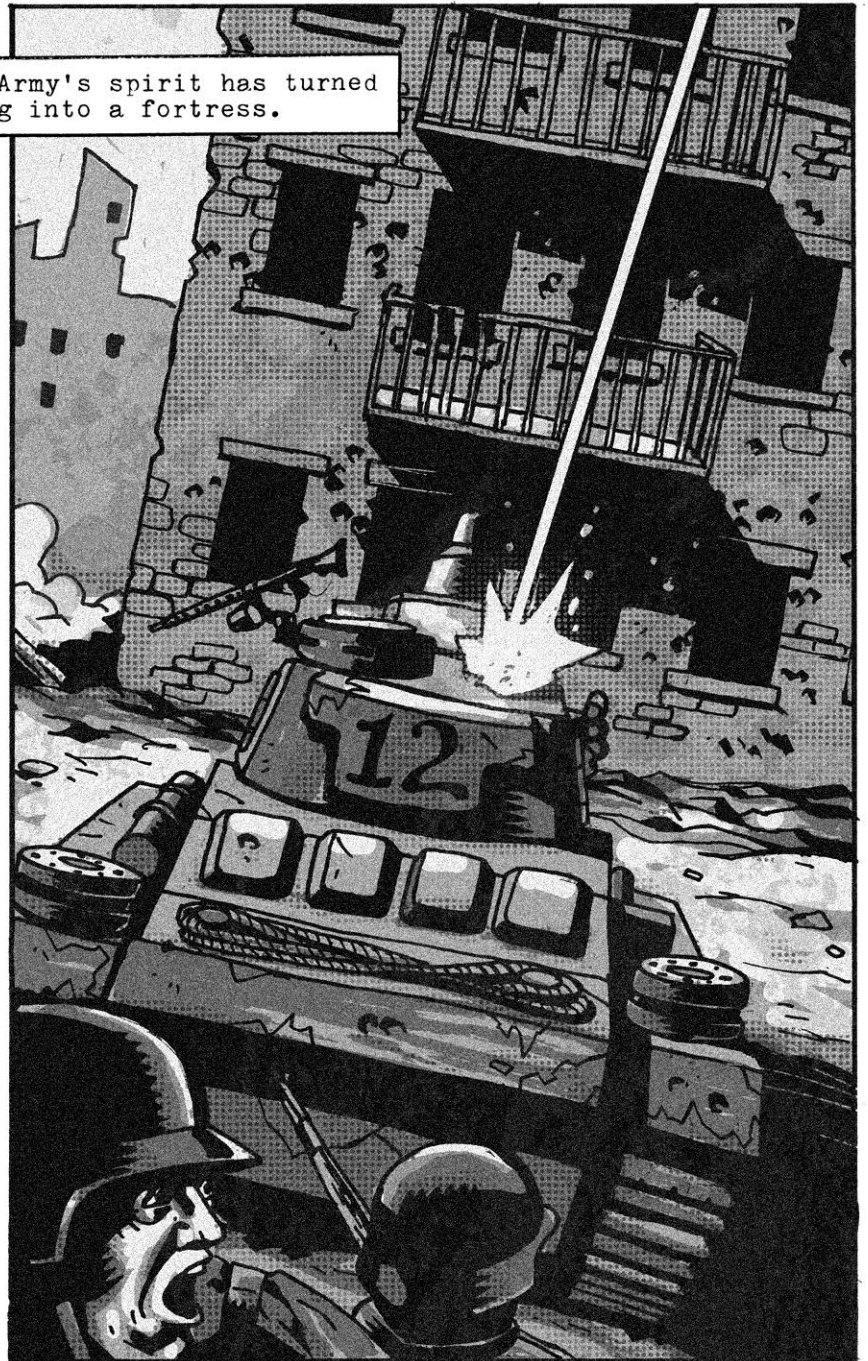




Everything they have has been thrown at us.



But the Red Army's spirit has turned  
this building into a fortress.



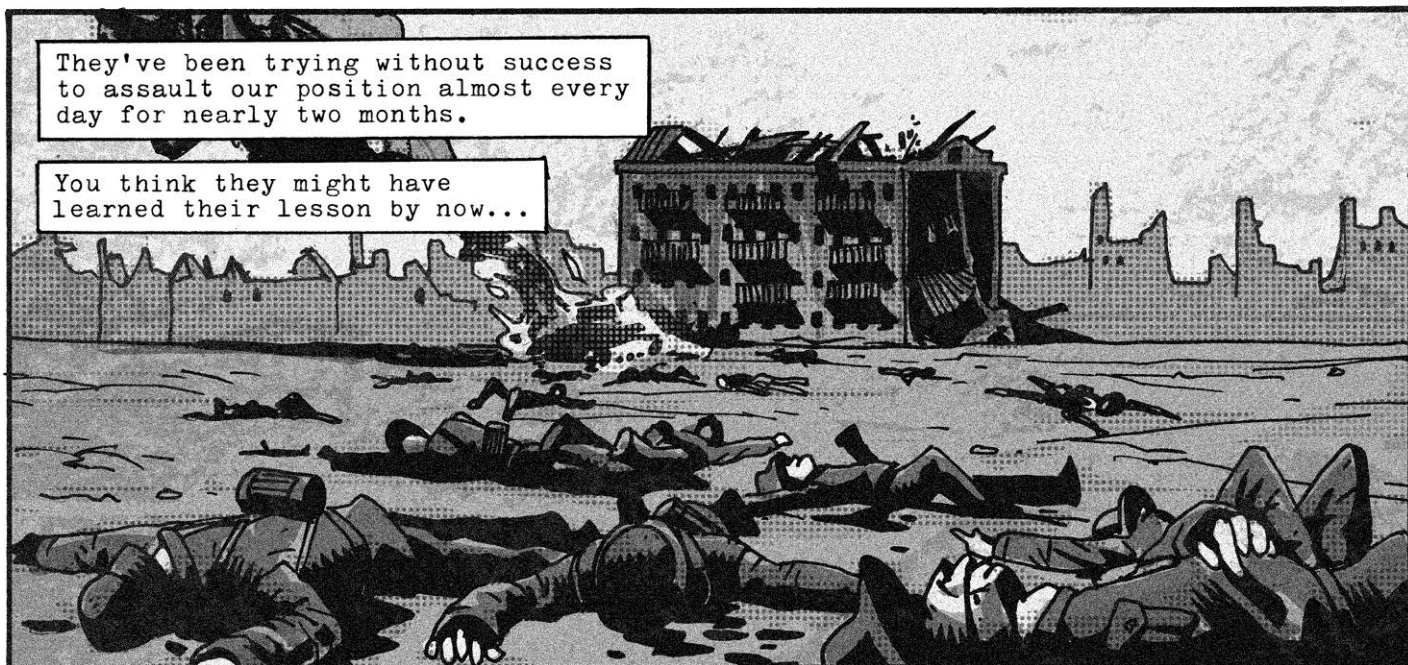


The Germans will never take this place.  
Remember, "Not one step back".



They've been trying without success  
to assault our position almost every  
day for nearly two months.

You think they might have  
learned their lesson by now...



We've killed so many that we have to go knock over  
the piles of corpses, so their living companions  
can't use them as cover during their next assault.





So here I am, Svetlana Nosova;  
just an ordinary girl trying to  
come to terms with my little  
apartment ending up the centre  
of a battlefield in the largest,  
most vicious war in our history.



I didn't always live in Stalingrad, being born on  
a farm in the foothills of the Ural Mountains.



I used to love playing in the meadows after the spring melt,  
my parents watching over me while they tended the farm.

But that's all gone now. All we have  
is our survival, each other, and the  
hope that one day this'll all be over.





Papa had fought in the Great War. He'd been shot in the chest leading a charge against enemy lines.



He survived, but since then had been unable to do hard physical work. Which is why we moved here.



He'd been upset about his weakness, but determined to overcome it and get a job in the city.



When the Germans invaded, my brother, Taras, was drafted into the army to help fight them.



TARAS, **PROMISE** YOU'LL COME BACK. PLEASE?

HEY SVET, THE MOTHERLAND **NEEDS** ME. WILL YOU BE STRONG, AND PROTECT THE FAMILY WHILE I'M AWAY?

I PROMISE, BROTHER.



He was killed a few days later. It really was up to me to protect Mama and Papa now.

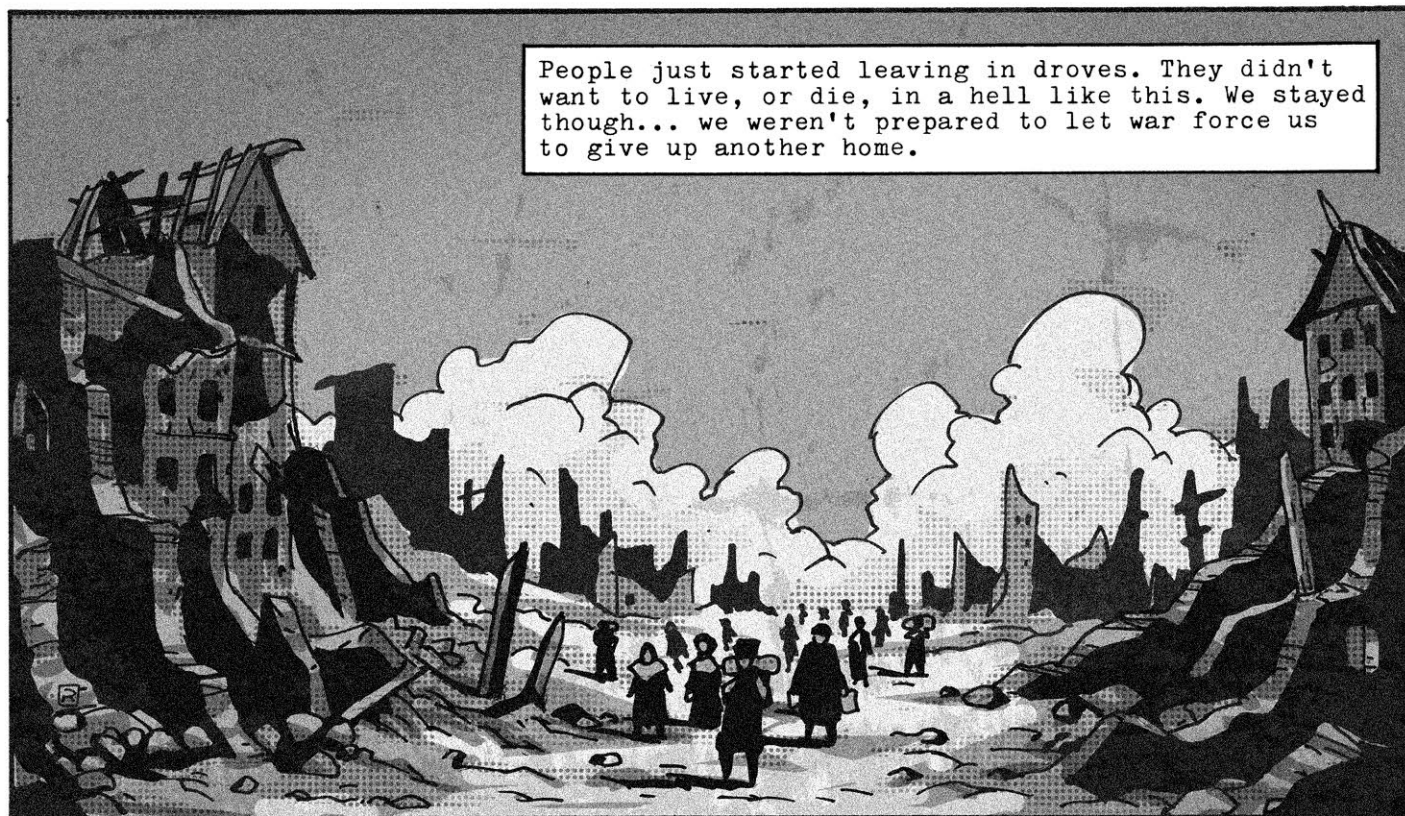


Not that I could do anything against aircraft...

The Germans bombed the city day and night. Mama was killed when a bomb landed on the ration store she was queueing in.



People just started leaving in droves. They didn't want to live, or die, in a hell like this. We stayed though... we weren't prepared to let war force us to give up another home.





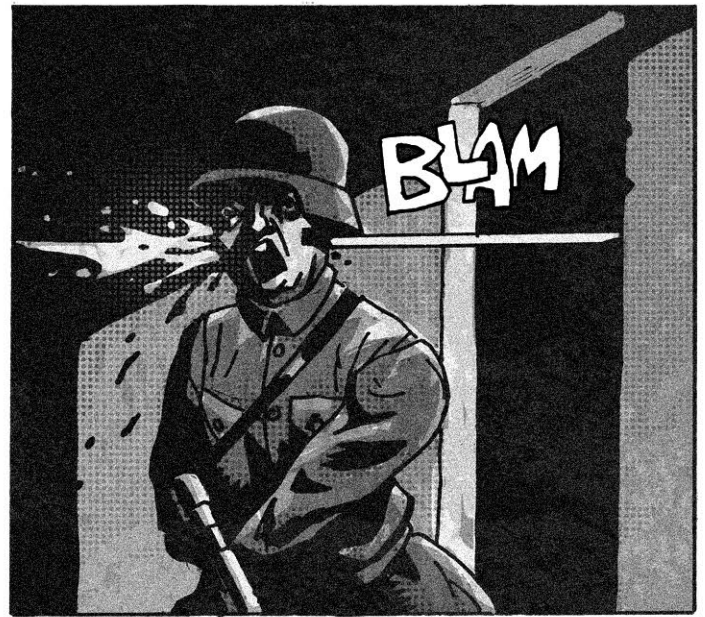
Then, the Germans overran the house,  
and our soldiers battled to stop them.  
Those of us remaining hid in the basement  
and prayed...

But we weren't the  
only ones to think  
of the basements...

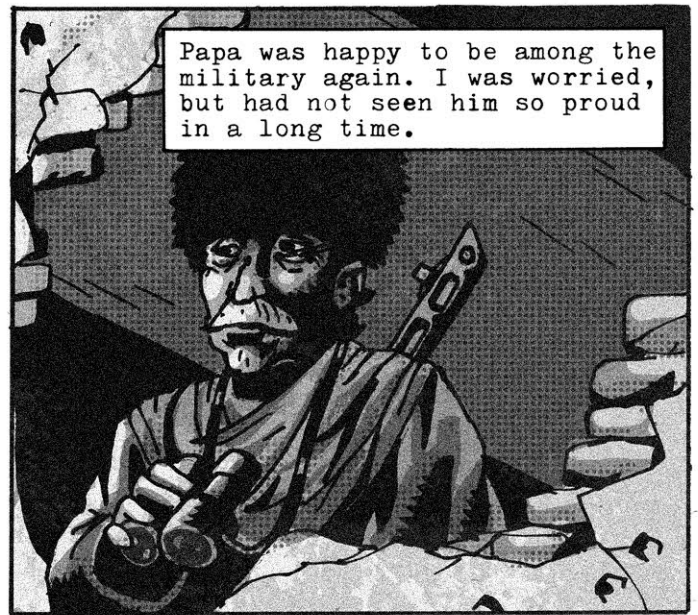
(SHIT! THEY'RE  
FOLLOWING US  
DOWN HERE!)













Pavlov ordered the sharpshooter, Ratmir, to teach me how to use a submachine gun.

It was only later that I found out he was just a little older than me. The war seemed to drain everyone of their youth and vigour.



He taught me well. I got the hang of shooting in no time.



Like most soldiers I met, Kovlova was surprisingly friendly and kind. These people weren't the superhumans the propaganda made them out to be... just people like me, turned into grim killers by circumstance.





Einar, the big jolly man.

Even in combat he raised morale by joking and taunting enemy soldiers. He's the only person I've ever met who's big and strong enough to use an anti-tank rifle on his own.

It took a few days, but eventually a trench was dug from friendly positions. Reinforcements brought with them much-needed food, water, and ammunition.

It gave us hope... we might actually hold out.

And then... nothing. After weeks of attacks, suddenly three days of uneasy calm...

THEY JUST KEEP BRINGING IN MORE TROOPS, THEY'RE *REALLY* TRYING THIS TIME...

WAIT- OH *HELLS*, THEY'RE ON THE MOVE AGAIN!

ANYTHING?

















BASTARDS!  
YOU BASTARDS!



(FIRE IN  
THE HOLE,  
BITCH!)



OH SHIT.



AAAUGH!

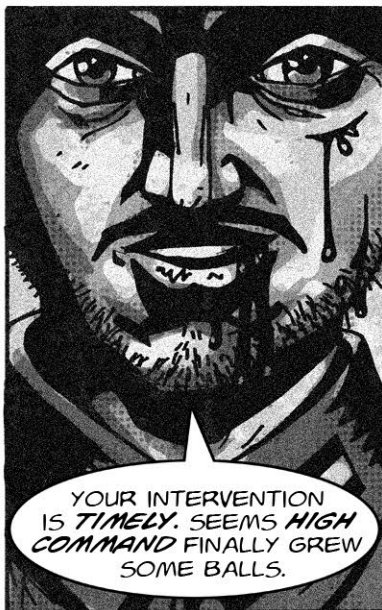




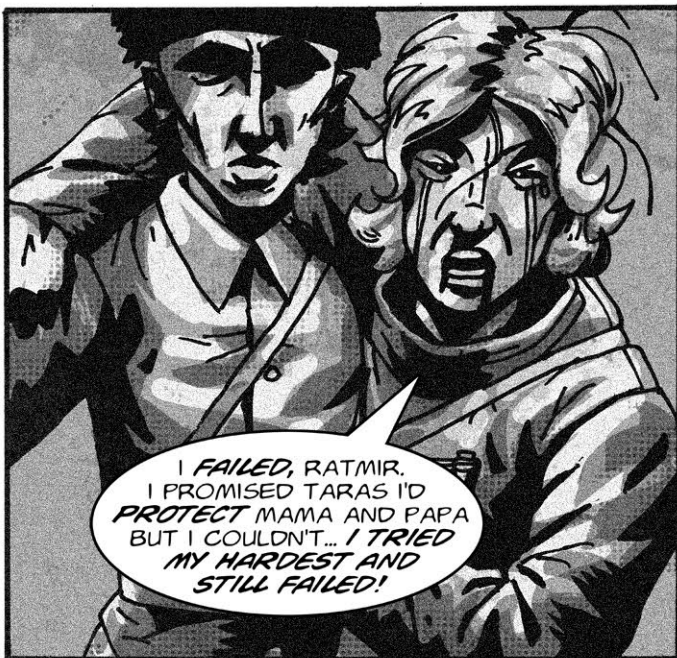














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## POSTSCRIPT

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-- Sgt., Yakov Pavlov survived the war a decorated veteran sergeant. After the war he joined the Communist Party, and went on to have a long and successful political career..

-- Kovlova was promoted to sergeant after the battle, and led her squad with distinction. Post-war she continued to rise through the ranks of the Red Army until her eventual retirement.

-- Einar went on to command his own anti-tank squad, and became an official tank killer "ace", personally destroying 17 German tanks. He was killed in action during the battle of the Kursk salient.

-- Ratmir served with distinction to the war's end, participating in many battles, including the capture of Berlin.. He disappeared without trace during the Berlin Airlift.

-- Svetlana Nosova fought alongside the Red Army for the remainder of the battle. Afterwards, she joined a partisan group and engaged in many significant actions behind enemy lines. She was captured and killed in 1944, her final action being her refusal to compromise her partisan comrades.





